

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

MEETING DATE: September 9, 2026

ITEM: 4

Executive Officer's Report

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September 4, 2026**

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Department of Water Resources Bulletin 74 California Well Standards Update
(Kevin Brown)

In late December 2020, Kevin Brown, Professional Geologist and Certified Engineering Geologist and an experienced staff member in our Toxics Cleanup Division, was selected to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Bulletin 74: California Well Standards Update Project.

The California Water Code requires DWR to establish minimum standards for groundwater supply wells, monitoring wells, and cathodic protection wells in California. Originally published in 1981 in cooperation with the State Water Resources Control Board and last updated in 1990, Bulletin 74 provides "minimum requirements for construction, alteration, maintenance, and destruction" of such wells. California cities and counties, as well as certain water agencies, are required to enact local well ordinances that meet or exceed the standards outlined in Bulletin 74.

The Technical Advisory Committee was established to update the decades-old standards engaging a collaborative and integrated group of practicing engineers and hydrologists, geologists and hydrogeologists, environmental scientists, contractors, and others representing multiple state and local municipalities, water agencies, private consulting companies, well drillers, and material suppliers.

Led by the DWR personnel and a private hydrogeology consulting firm, the update effort involved numerous Technical Advisory Committee Focus Groups. In 2021 and 2022, staff participated in several of these groups, including the Large Diameter Infiltration/Recharge Wells and Water Wells collectives and the Water Well Siting and Design, Well Destruction, Monitoring Wells, and Geothermal Heat Exchange Wells.

Over the last several years, the DWR and its consultant have taken the feedback provided by the various Focus Groups and worked to develop an update to Bulletin 74. In September 2026, the Technical Advisory Committee will regroup for several meetings to preview the administrative draft, providing an opportunity for the San Francisco Bay Regional staff to review and discuss the proposed updates. Following the September meetings, DWR will continue the administrative and public review process before finalizing the updated standards. Based on the current project schedule, the updated Bulletin 74 is expected to be completed in 2027.

**Follow-up on Board Resolution adopted with the Nutrients Watershed Permit
(Eileen White and Kevin Lunde)**

On July 10, 2024, the Board adopted the Nutrients Watershed Permit (Order R2-2024-0013) and imposed total inorganic nitrogen effluent limits on publicly owned treatment works (wastewater treatment plants) discharging to San Francisco Bay. The permit included ten-year compliance schedules, the maximum allowed by the State Water Board's Compliance Schedule Policy (Compliance Schedule Policy). This timeframe disincentivized multi-benefit solutions and innovative technologies to reduce nitrogen loads. The Board subsequently adopted Resolution R2-2024-0014 *Resolution to Identify and Consider Regulatory Mechanisms to Extend Compliance Schedules for Nutrient Effluent Limitations* directing staff to evaluate and pursue options that would provide more time for wastewater treatment plants to comply with the Nutrients Watershed Permit.

After lengthy discussions with State Board executive management and legal counsel about the various regulatory tools available to the Water Board to allow dischargers more time to comply with the permit, we decided to proceed with a non-TMDL Basin Plan amendment to grant these projects more time while incorporating new technologies to reduce nitrogen loads and ensuring compliance as soon as possible. We then developed draft Basin Plan amendment language aligned with the non-TMDL approach and worked closely with legal counsel to ensure alignment with the Compliance Schedule Policy.

After receiving feedback from the wastewater agencies on the draft language last fall, we expanded the scope of the project beyond the three multi-benefit nutrient reduction projects specified in the resolution. For example, we learned that some conventional nutrient reduction projects may take more than ten years to complete and cannot be completed any faster despite diligent work to plan, design, and construct the facilities. In addition, we learned that wastewater treatment plants may need more time if they pursue an innovative pilot project, and the pilot is unsuccessful and they have to switch back to conventional nutrient reduction methods. In response to these changes, we worked closely with State Water Board executive management and legal counsel to revise the project scope accordingly. We continue to coordinate with both U.S. EPA and Baykeeper to keep them apprised of the project and to share initial concepts.

Due to the complexity of this project, the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) agreed to fund a consultant working directly for the Regional Water Board to support the environmental analysis that is required for the Basin Plan amendment. BACWA approved the funding and scope of work in June 2026. We are working closely with the consultant to prepare the draft environmental analysis for the project. We recently engaged with California Native American Tribes to solicit feedback on possible impacts to tribal cultural resources and held a California Environmental Quality Act public scoping meeting on July 23, which was well attended. To ensure the project doesn't have disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged communities, we held two meetings with leaders of community-based organizations. We plan to release the draft Basin Plan

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amendment language and staff report for public comment in January 2027 and to schedule this item for the Board's consideration in May or June 2027.

Valley of the Moon Water District, Aquifer Storage and Recovery Facilities Grand Opening (Dana McCarthy, David Tanouye, and Jessica Watkins)

On July 28, 2026, Regional Water Board staff attended the grand opening of the Valley of the Moon Water District's Aquifer Storage and Recovery facilities in Sonoma County. Aquifer storage and recovery allows water agencies to store surface water in an aquifer when supplies are available and recover the water during dry periods or emergencies. This project is particularly important for the Sonoma Valley groundwater basin—a high-priority basin under the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act—because it provides the Water District with another tool to improve local water supply reliability while reducing reliance on groundwater during dry periods. The Valley of the Moon Water District serves 23,750 residents within a 12 square-mile area of the Sonoma Valley.

The Water District is one of the agencies that make up Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency, which is the overarching agency responsible for implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for the Sonoma Valley groundwater basin. The Water District received a \$3 million grant through the Department of Water Resources [Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Program](#) to evaluate the feasibility of aquifer storage and recovery and to construct facilities at the Park Avenue and Verano Avenue sites.

From Pilot Test to Permanent Aquifer Storage and Recovery Facilities

In the [May 2025 Executive Officer's Report](#), we provided an update on the Water District's aquifer storage and recovery pilot test at the Park Avenue and Verano Avenue sites and its evaluation of whether drinking water could be injected, stored, and subsequently recovered from the aquifer. The Regional Water Board issued the Notice of Applicability (NOA) for State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order 2012-0010-DWQ, *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Aquifer Storage and Recovery Projects that Inject Drinking Water into Groundwater* (General Order), allowing the Water District to conduct the feasibility study and pilot test. From November 2024 through March 2025, two injection, storage, and recovery cycles were conducted at each site using treated drinking water supplied from the Russian River by the Sonoma County Water Agency. A total of about 25 acre-feet or eight million gallons was injected and recovered at Park and Verano Avenues.

The pilot testing demonstrated that aquifer storage and recovery was feasible at both locations with each site capable of storing more than 10 acre-feet of groundwater. In February 2026, following review of the pilot test findings, including the determination that groundwater quality degradation is not expected from full-scale aquifer storage and recovery operations, the Regional Water Board issued a Revised Notice of Applicability allowing the Water District to operate permanent aquifer storage and recovery systems

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at both sites under the General Order. The permanent aquifer storage and recovery facilities constructed at Park Avenue and Verano Avenue are shown in Photos 1 and 2 below.



Photo 1: Park Avenue Aquifer Storage and Recovery facility can pump up to approximately 150 gallons per minute of groundwater.



Photo 2: Verano Avenue Aquifer Storage and Recovery facility can pump up to approximately 200 gallons per minute of groundwater.

Supporting Groundwater Sustainability

The Water District's Aquifer Storage and Recovery Program aligns with California's statewide water resilience initiatives, including the 2020 *Water Resilience Portfolio* and 2022 *California's Water Supply Strategy*, which emphasize diversifying water supplies, expanding water storage, increasing groundwater recharge, and preparing for more extreme droughts and floods. The state identifies groundwater basins as a critical component of California's water storage system and supports projects that increase the use of groundwater storage and recharge to improve water supply reliability. These efforts demonstrate how investments in local groundwater storage can advance statewide water resilience while strengthening long-term water supply reliability for communities and water systems.

Pescadero-Butano Sediment TMDL Implementation Update (Lisa Hunt)

The Basin Plan amendment establishing the Pescadero-Butano Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Habitat Enhancement Plan became effective in May 2019. Since then, implementation has advanced through road-erosion controls, grant-funded technical assistance, and substantial stream-habitat restoration. San Mateo County Public Works, San Mateo County Parks, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Big Creek Lumber Company, and Redtree Properties Limited Partnership are documented as meeting applicable performance standards based on either road sediment-delivery or hydrologic-connectivity metrics. Despite already meeting TMDL requirements, these organizations are continuing to work collaboratively on additional high priority sediment load reduction projects and creek restoration projects that help to trap sediment while improving habitat for coho salmon, steelhead, and other aquatic species.

Sediment reduction

Clean Water Act section 319(h) Nonpoint Source grants have been a key implementation tool. An \$800,000 grant awarded in 2020 to the San Mateo Resource Conservation District along with \$1.58 million in matching funds from San Mateo County Parks supported the Old Haul Road Sediment Reduction Project. The project was designed to stabilize the large failing Dark Gulch crossing and stormproof two miles of legacy logging road, with an estimated prevention of more than 39,000 tons of sediment delivery over 20 years.

More recently, the 319(h) program awarded \$1 million to San Mateo County for the Pescadero Creek Watershed Roads Sediment Reduction Project to upgrade four high-priority stream crossings on Wurr and Old Haul Roads that are expected to prevent more than 2,600 tons of excess sediment from reaching Pescadero Creek tributaries over 20 years. Two Old Haul Road culverts were completed during fiscal year 2025-26, and the County has scheduled 12 additional culvert replacements or repairs on Wurr Road, Pescadero Creek Road, and Cloverdale Road to be completed by June 2027. An additional 319(h) grant of \$197,240 is being awarded to the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to develop designs to repair and upgrade four high priority eroding stream crossings on San Mateo County Parks Old Haul Road.

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District also obtained a foundation grant to support a 2023 rural-roads workshop that led to completion of approximately 20 road and erosion assessments on agricultural and grazing parcels in fiscal year 2023-24. Additional funding and resources will be needed to conduct assessments on the remaining agricultural and grazing parcels called for in the TMDL.

Habitat restoration

Restoration projects directly advance the Habitat Enhancement Plan by reconnecting floodplains, improving fish passage, increasing channel and pool complexity, restoring riparian vegetation, and adding large wood. Since 2020, seven projects have been completed. The Cloverdale Road Bridge and Butano Creek channel restoration raised the incised streambed, stabilized banks, planted riparian vegetation, and constructed

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four large-wood habitat pools. The Mindego Creek Fish Passage Project restored fish access to approximately five miles of creek. The Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project created more than four acres of inset floodplain and nearly two acres of riparian transition zone, while adding habitat complexity along approximately 1,800 feet of channel.

Other completed habitat restoration work includes approximately 32 large-wood clusters at 35 sites along more than two miles of Pescadero Creek in County Park; nine large-wood features at Camp Butano; the Pescadero Marsh Habitat Restoration and Resiliency Project; and the Little Butano Creek Fish Passage and Habitat Enhancement Project, which remediated a barrier, reconnected floodplain areas, and installed large wood. State Parks is planning to implement the Evans and Peters Creek Fish Passage and Habitat Enhancement Project in Portola Redwoods State Park by October 2026. In addition, the Little Butano Streamflow and Habitat Enhancement Project at Root Down and the Pescadero Upper Town Reach Project are currently in design.

Monitoring

Monitoring and technical studies conducted since TMDL adoption have established or expanded baseline information for the TMDL and Habitat Enhancement Plan numeric targets and for watershed flow and sediment transport. In summer 2023, Water Board staff surveyed residual fine-sediment storage in three Butano Creek reaches and found that values exceeded the TMDL target and were greater than those measured in Pescadero Creek in 2019-20. Because the 2020 San Mateo-Santa Cruz administrative division of CAL FIRE (CZU) fire and the exceptionally wet winter of 2022-23 may have increased fine-sediment storage, the results are best treated as a post-disturbance baseline for repeat monitoring. Large-wood surveys in 2025 covered 17 sites and 3.9 hectares of channel. Six of 15 surveyed redwood reaches were below the TMDL wood-loading target, with the most consistent deficits along the Pescadero Creek mainstem, while all surveyed redwood reaches in Butano Creek exceeded the target. Survey results will be used to help guide planning and prioritization for future restoration and sediment reduction projects.

Under contract to the Water Board, the San Francisco Estuary Institute conducted continuous streamflow and turbidity monitoring, and suspended sediment concentration sampling. The results identified a two-year post-CZU fire period of elevated baseflow, disproportionate peak flow, channel sedimentation, and suspended-sediment transport, with transport rates similar to those measured after historic logging in the 1970s. Rates receded in the third and fourth post-fire years, and the study estimated approximately 30,000 tons of additional sediment was attributable to the fire.



Photo 1: Large wood survey in Butano Creek

Staff Updates (Eileen M. White)



Charles Hardy has been hired as a Senior Water Resource Control Engineer in the NPDES Wastewater Division. Charles will lead the section overseeing recycled water, wastewater discharges to land, Industrial General Permit / Construction General Permit for stormwater and related enforcement. Charles originally hails from Texas, leaving to receive a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering at Yale University, followed by relocating to the San Francisco Bay Area to earn a Master of Science in Civil and

Environmental Engineering from Stanford University. Charles is a registered Professional Civil Engineer in California and as an engineering consultant in the Bay Area over the last 22 years, Charles has developed expertise on a variety of water quality items, with a key focus on planning and permitting for municipal wastewater. His most recent projects include municipal recycled water and land discharge activities throughout California and the Pacific Northwest. Charles and his family have lived for many years in the Pleasant Hill / Walnut Creek area.



Erica Varon Rodriguez was hired as an Environmental Scientist in the NPDES Wastewater and Enforcement Division's Individual Permitting Section, where she will oversee and reissue NPDES permits for wastewater treatment facilities and industrial facilities. She has previously held staff positions at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, where she conducted biological

sampling and fisheries surveys throughout the Bay Area, and at the U.S. Geological Survey, where she conducted research on wetland restoration and habitat quality in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as toxicological research on selenium in the Salton Sea. Erica received a Bachelor of Science in Conservation and Resource Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University. In her free time, Erica enjoys being outdoors with her family, baking at home, or reading a good book.

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401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Joseph Martinez)

The table below lists those applications received for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification from July 9 through August 12, 2026. A check mark in the right-hand column indicates a project with work that may be in the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) jurisdiction.

Project Name	City/Location	County	May have BCDC Jurisdiction
Alameda Point Pier 2 Fender Systems Repairs Project	Alameda	Alameda	X
UC Berkeley Strawberry Creek Utilities Crossing Project	Berkeley	Alameda	
Offshore Geotechnical Explorations - Proposed Marine Shipping Terminal, Former Oakland Army Base, Berth 7 Area	Oakland	Alameda	X
G-1-1 Repairs Project	Pleasanton	Alameda	
Electric Tower Maintenance Bundle Program – 2026 (Project)	Multiple	Alameda, Santa Clara	X
Moraga Canyon Road Culvert Replacement Project	Moraga	Contra Costa	
Keller Beach Improvement Project	Richmond	Contra Costa	X
Muir Woods Dipsea Bridge Project	Mill Valley	Marin	
Mill Valley Middle School Bank Stabilization Project	Mill Valley	Marin	
Nicasio Reservoir Vegetation Management Project	Nicasio	Marin	
Bayside Acres Beach Sewer Relocation Project – Phase C	San Rafael	Marin	X
Harrold Res _ Seawall Repair	Tiburon	Marin	X
Tiburon Railroad Marsh Aquatic Plant Management Project	Tiburon	Marin	

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Project Name	City/Location	County	May have BCDC Jurisdiction
Calle Del Arroyo Channel Vegetation Management Project	Unincorporated	Marin	
Crest Marin Pump Station Rehabilitation	Unincorporated	Marin	
China Camp Pile Improvements Project		Marin	X
Diamond Creek Vineyards Bridge Repair Project	Calistoga	Napa	
I-1020 DFM-0405-01 MP 6.45 Stuck Pig	Napa	Napa	
SAFER Bay Project	Menlo Park	San Mateo	X
South San Francisco PUC Development Project	South San Francisco	San Mateo	
Culvert Headwall Replacement 52 Woods Lane	Los Altos	Santa Clara	
Shoreline Park Water Control Structures Improvements	Mountain View	Santa Clara	X
Hicks Creek Off-Site Mitigation Project	San Jose	Santa Clara	
VTA Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project – Geotech Investigations	San Jose	Santa Clara	X
External Corrosion Maintenance on Pipeline L-182 MP 12.44 Over Unnamed Slough	Unincorporated	Solano	